

Villa Monterey Townhouse Historic District **Historic Significance and Integrity Assessment Report**

Background

In March of 2007, representatives of the Villa Monterey 1-9 Homeowners Associations initially contacted the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) about designating their townhome neighborhood as a historic district. The residents were advised that no research and analysis had been undertaken on townhouses and their historic development in Scottsdale to date. Consequently, there was no basis for making judgments about the relative significance, integrity and, consequently, eligibility for designation of the Villa Monterey neighborhood on the Scottsdale Historic Register. The homeowners shared information they had gathered about the history and importance of their townhouse neighborhood, offered support in further research work and urged the HPC's consideration of their request. The HPC decided to include efforts to evaluate this historic residential population as part of their annual work program and directed staff to begin work on a context study related to the historic influences its development.

An historic context report was completed by Linnea Caproni, an ASU public history graduate student, in 2009. As the work on the historic context report was being finalized, a city-wide survey was initiated of the existing townhouse developments, which were built during the period 1950 -1974, to identify the best representative examples of the historic influences and architecture that distinguishes this property type. The survey field work was conducted by Historic Preservation (HP) staff, program interns and the HPC. Some 5871 townhouses were studied as part of this work. These townhomes were located in fifty-six separate development complexes that were made up of eighty-one recorded subdivision plats. In the course of the survey work, the townhouse developments were divided into various subsets based on their size, physical arrangement, architecture and community amenities so that comparative analysis could be done. Out of the total surveyed, six townhome complexes were selected as the best illustrations of the relevant historic context themes. The Villa Monterey Townhouse neighborhood was determined to be one of the top-ranked areas that warranted further work to document its importance and how it met the HP ordinance criteria for listing on the Scottsdale Historic Register.

Historic Context

National Post WWII Residential Development

In the twenty years after World War II, America experienced an unprecedented housing boom. This boom added more than twenty-five million new residential structures to our cities and towns by the year 1965. Demographic factors, socioeconomic conditions and trends, the availability of land, and government policies all influenced the spiraling demand for housing. In the postwar era, housing starts by month and year grew to be an important economic indicator for the first time and housing for Americans became both a national priority and big business.

During the first decade after WW II, housing demand favored single family home construction. Between 1945 and 1955, most of the residential growth was of free-standing, or detached, homes with multifamily units accounting for less than fifteen percent of new housing construction. The preference for single family detached housing had been established in the early days of the nation's settlement. It symbolized independence and personal identity and many of the egalitarian qualities underlying the establishment of American democracy. Historical studies indicate that the typical postwar American household would have chosen ownership of a freestanding, single family home, if given the opportunity. This notwithstanding, by the late 1960s housing development included a growing volume of postwar multifamily housing products. Some of this change related to shifting family structures during this time. In the 1960s wives were increasingly becoming wage-earners while single parents and self-supporting unmarried persons moved up as heads of households. These changes affected the financial practicability of single family home ownership.

In the early 1960s, along with the growth of planned "New Towns," many developers began building master-planned residential developments, particularly in the West. Many of these developments offered both single and multifamily housing along with recreational amenities. Single family attached (SFA) homes were constructed by attaching walls of their housing units and situating them in high-density complexes with shared common spaces. The single family attached house or "Townhome" offered benefits for both developers and buyers. The SFA home design of shared walls, roofs, parking areas and infrastructure cost less per unit than detached homes and the space which would have been used for private yards accommodated additional units instead. This cost-effectiveness spurred their production. The fact that they "felt" like single family homes also contributed to their popularity. Consequently, in their advertisements, SFA developers touted the similarities of townhouses to private detached homes.

The units came complete with appliances, such as new refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, and garbage disposals; had private, often fenced, backyards and "park-like" settings for their common outdoor spaces. These new, less costly, developments quickly attracted the buyers who were unable to afford single family detached housing but who desired home ownership and community amenities. When townhouse developments began to offer FHA and VA financing in the late 1960s/early 1970s this expanded their potential markets. To appeal to the lifestyles of newly-married couples and retirees, townhouse promotions began to emphasize the maintenance-free aspect of townhome living which did not require the time or physical effort needed for traditional home upkeep. When choosing site locations, SAF developers sought townhouse locations situated near existing residences and service and retail centers. In the West this resulted in the placement of most early townhouse complexes near or in the newly built single family housing developments and on, or just off, major arterial roads. Thus situated, townhouses were imbued with a sense of place that fused the neighborhood appeal of a single family residential area environment with the comfort of easy access to city conveniences, similar to high density urban apartment living. It is a testament to the allure and profitability of SFA complexes that townhouses and condominiums composed nearly one-third of new construction in the United States by 1970.

Regional and Local Townhouse Development

In the 1960s and 1970s, California moved to the forefront in the development and design of townhouse communities. Although considered by some to be a descendant of the Eastern “row house,” the townhomes of the West developed in response to the markedly different lifestyles of the region. The Western Townhome was not a continuation of the building practices of earlier periods nor a local expression of the planning principles of cluster housing and new town developments which guided 1960s housing development in the East. Instead they embodied the lifestyle change embraced by America in the years after WWII. Notably, the Western townhouse usually included courtyards, atriiums patios and resort-like landscaping and other features important to recreating and outdoor living and entertaining. According to numerous planning and real estate studies which sought to analyze the rise in popularity of this housing form, townhouses of the West emphasized more light and color in the kitchen and bathroom areas. Western complexes also were given names that implied glamour or the exotic rather than labels suggesting pastoral environments, such as “village, orchard, oaks or farms,” used for Eastern developments.

Just like in the first half of the twentieth century, Arizona builders and developers closely watched and borrowed freely from the California housing development trends and practices during the postwar years. An excellent example of the influences of the California Townhouse concept can be seen in the planning and development of the Villa Monterey Townhomes in Scottsdale, Arizona. Dave Friedman was successful builder in Philadelphia who moved to Arizona almost an invalid to retire. However, his health improved and he became involved in local housing construction. He established Butler Homes, Inc. and built several small-scale, traditional housing developments that were financially successful. In 1959-1960 Friedman acquired approximately 100 acres north of Camelback Road and the Arizona Canal. A huge wash cut through the acreage which would have a major impact on any development which might occur.

While mulling over his options, Friedman and his wife travelled to Carmel and the Monterey peninsula in California. According to a 1966 article in Scottsdale’s newspaper, the *Arizona*, Friedman described how he became fascinated by the many houses in California that were being built close together but in such a way that they retained charm and practicality. He decided to try a similar development for his Scottsdale property. Drawing upon the West’s Spanish territorial past, he planned a “casita colony” which Friedman defined as “small houses built together.” This concept also suggested a type of neighborhood living that would be as intimate and friendly as the romantic Spanish colonial living traditions. Importantly, Friedman understood the segmented buyer market which was emerging within America’s increasingly-mobile society. Friedman saw the townhouse concept as ideal for buyers in the earlier interim or transient stages of life as well as for those in the latter stages of life who preferred low-maintenance property in order to “jet around the world without having to worry about what happens to the old homestead’.” In this market families no longer remained together “as they did in years gone

by’,” and people retained a ‘spirit of living regardless of age’ in contrast to ‘the Pullman-car days, [when] the old folks just sat on the front porch and rocked’.”

The first unit of the Villa Monterey Colony was constructed in 1961 and in six months 180 houses were sold. Purported to be the first successful townhome project in Arizona, similar developments soon followed Villa Monterey in the metropolitan Phoenix area and Tucson. By 1969 there were nearly 50 townhouse developments in Scottsdale. Although many builders were active, Dell Traylor and John C. Hall of Hallcraft Homes led the construction of both large and small townhouse complexes throughout the 1970s. The national and regional boom in townhouse construction in the 1960s prompted an increased number of zoning requests for townhouses in Scottsdale in the 1970s. The advent of large mixed-use developments also contributed to this phenomenon as it was often easier to obtain approvals for high-density residential developments if they are part of a larger mixed-use development plan than a stand-alone project. Thus during the period 1970-1980, with the sanction of approximately 20,000 dwelling units as part of major, mixed-use development projects of 80+ acres, land available for townhouse projects became more plentiful in Scottsdale. With the growing demand for this housing type, many properties originally zoned for apartments also were used to construct a townhouse project instead.

In Scottsdale another important influence on townhouse development was the crusade to improve central Scottsdale’s Indian Bend Wash. In the early 20th century Indian Bend Wash was considered an eyesore that divided the community when it periodically flooded. In 1961 the Corps of Engineers developed a plan for a concrete channel, 23’ deep and 170’ wide, to line Indian Bend Wash to control flooding. Most Scottsdale citizens opposed the concrete channel and recommended that the town pursue a greenbelt solution instead whereby lands within the floodplain would be donated to the City for the greenbelt in exchange for “zoning or other means to raise the value of their remaining [adjacent] land.” In 1965 the City hired an engineer to analyze Maricopa County Flood Control District and the Corps of Engineers plans for the concrete channel. The “Erikson Plan” (named for the engineer who headed up the study) also recommended a greenbelt alternative. There followed a decade of disputes among the parties involved over the design and funding for the needed improvements. However, in 1974, after a major 1972 flood had destroyed numerous homes along the 7-1/2-mile wash and curtailed plans for any future home building within the Wash’s floodplains, the Corps finally approved the greenbelt alternative. With the adoption of the 1974 greenbelt plan, the City of Scottsdale agreed to grant landowners higher density zoning in exchange for their investment in improvements to Indian Bend Wash and their provision of the needed floodplain easements to the City. As a result, numerous multi-family and townhouse developments were approved for 736 acres of private land along the length of the 1200-acre wash.

Another important impetus to townhome development, nationally and locally, was the concerted and, ultimately successful, marketing approaches that sought to promote several key

aspects of townhouse development. First, it was stressed that townhouses were not condominiums or cooperatives. Purchasers actually owned their homes and the land under it. The property was conveyed by an individually-recorded deed protected by title insurance. Consequently, for real estate and legal purposes, a townhome was not that different from a detached single family home. The specialized residential environment provided was also extolled. Many developments were age-restricted to adults of 55+ years with recreational amenities and social activities established accordingly. While the individuals were assured privacy, the sense and benefits of belonging to a community were also available to residents. Well-planned, these development sought to provide resort living at home, balancing suburban tranquility with urban conveniences.

The Form and Physical Characteristics of Townhomes

Townhouses are defined and categorized by the Maricopa County Recorder and Assessor's office as a specific building type, the single family attached (SFA) dwelling. Like the traditional home the, single family detached (SFD) dwelling, the SFA house is designed for occupancy by one family or living unit and it sits on its own platted lot within a subdivision. The townhome is constructed, however, to have one or two party walls shared by an adjacent home or homes. While attached to each other, each townhouse is a single residence vertically. That is, there is no other home above or below it. This is the primary factor that distinguishes it from a condominium which is not a physical property type but a form of ownership.

The size of townhomes which were built during the post WWII era was typically smaller than single family detached homes but larger than most apartments. In Scottsdale they ranged in size from under 1000 square feet to larger units of 2200 to 3000 square feet. The majority, however, were 1300 to 1800 square feet in size. One and two-story heights were found in most developments, many offering a choice of one or another. There were also variations in how parking was provided for the homes in terms of its type, size and location. Carports were most common and found in approximately seventy-five percent of the town home developments. These one- or two-car carports were located next to the houses, at the rear or in covered parking areas separate from the dwelling unit. Enclosing a carport to become a garage was an option frequently offered by builders and garages became increasingly prevalent as time progressed. Most homes had outdoor living areas including front porches and patios. Backyard spaces, when provided, were often fenced.

There were distinct differences in the design and physical layout of the complexes among the Scottsdale townhouse developments. Some of this related to the number of units in a row that were attached to one another. Generally three or more units constitute a row. Some, however, were constructed in pairs. These 'twins' or semi-detached' homes were attached by a single party wall to only one adjacent home. How the rows or collections of dwelling units were arranged within a complex provided another variation in their appearances. The traditional row arrangement with the home's primary façade fronting the street was most common and is found

on eighty-five percent of Scottsdale's post-WWII townhomes developments. Another seven percent of the complexes have curvilinear streets and/or houses staggered in a non-linear fashion along winding roadways. Another distinct type is the "clustered" townhouse complex. These are developments with three or more townhomes grouped together and arranged on the site in a manner that is not necessarily related to the road ways. They may be oriented or arranged around a community facility such as a pool or green space. Within the groups the houses have one or more shared walls with one another. Parking maybe adjacent to homes or grouped themselves in defined parking areas. Common driveways and open spaces between the groupings are also found.

Like single family subdivisions, the size of townhome developments ranged in size to those quite small with less than twenty-five houses to those with hundreds of dwelling units. Forty-five percent of the townhomes built in Scottsdale in the post WWII years, are located in large developments with 200+ units.

There is no dominant architectural style that characterizes the design of post WWII townhouse or a style that relates to specific time subset within that period. Instead historic townhouse architecture was usually a simplified version of the popular styles found on single family homes that were built during the same time period. Simple geometric forms are employed in the massing and proportions of the construction. Materials types; the inclusion of selected architectural features, such as arched opening; or a minimal level detailing was employed as a means of giving a townhouse an architectural character. For the housing constructed in Scottsdale during the two decades following World War II, the predominant identifiable influences were those typical of the "Ranch House," "Modern" and "Postwar Period Revivals" styles.

Villa Monterey Historic District Summary

Description

The proposed Villa Monterey Historic District is a residential neighborhood generally located just to the north of the commercial core of Scottsdale's downtown. The proposed historic district boundaries include plats 1 through 7, which were subdivided and built up during the period 1961-1969. It is comprised of 758 individually-owned houses and thirteen areas, owned in common by the various home-owner associations, which are dispersed throughout the area. With its multiple plats, Villa Monterey is the largest historic townhome complex in Scottsdale. The district is distinguished from its surroundings in a variety of ways. Features such as entry signage, low walls and picturesque structures and elements define the entrances to the neighborhood. Tree-lined medians, undeveloped landscaped lots at corner locations, plantings and other vegetation also create distinctive streetscapes within the complexes. This setting combines with the consistent scale, massing, form and materials of the buildings to give the

proposed historic district a visual cohesiveness and set it apart from other residential developments

The streets in the proposed Villa Monterey Historic District are, for the most part, laid out in a traditional grid fashion with some curvature related to topography of the Arizona Canal on the west and to allow the incorporation of common areas for the subdivision's amenities. The houses are primarily situated in traditional rows with the home's main entrance fronting the street and its parking adjacent to the house. Yards are small but nicely landscaped with traditional grass lawns, shrubbery and mature trees. Others have desert landscaping with cactus, desert trees and plantings. The outside areas have seating and lawn furniture, art elements, fountains and flowering plants in pots – all which convey a sense that there is extensive use of the outdoor spaces, as well as a notable pride in the appearance of their properties and the neighborhood by its residents. The common areas are typically gated and fenced. Their appurtenances include clubhouses, pools, patios, ramadas, fountains, barbeque grills, picnic area with umbrella tables and chairs. All of these amenities contribute to the resort-like setting of the area which was promoted from its beginnings.

Homes are both one and two story in height. While Unit 1 had only three two-story houses, the percentage of the total homes constructed with second stories continued to climb as additional plats were added to the development. The house walls are constructed of concrete painted block. Some have a light application of stucco on the exterior, although the block pattern underneath the stucco coating is often discernible. Most roofs are flat but there are also some low-pitched gabled roofs and hipped roofs over second story areas. The flat roofs are covered with built-up roofing materials. The pitched roofs have historically been sheathed with red clay barrel tiles. Over the years, the tile roofing has been replaced with asphalt shingles or concrete and synthetic material tiles, both rounded and flat. Almost all roofs have some sort of decorative treatment or moldings at the cornice. Many houses have short parapet walls that extend above the main body of the house along the length of its primary façade or in stepped segments. These parapets are also created by the addition of ornamental block or tile along the roof cornice. Roof eaves that extend out over the house can be bracketed or have exposed rafters. In addition to the roof cornice, a myriad of ornamental detailing has been applied to the exterior wall surfaces and surrounding the door, window and porch openings. These include decorative block patterning, raised reliefs, medallions, inset tiles, applied vigas and canales and ornamental ironwork. This detailing serves to customize each house, giving it an individualized appearance and reinforces the Southwestern styling of the architecture.

Typical of housing in the postwar era, windows are metal sliding units with horizontal proportions. They are in simple rectangular or square shapes. Large picture windows, single units or in pairs, are the dominant elements of most of the home's front elevation. Entry doors are often not noticeable as they lead from the carport or garage or are adjacent to the large window units. Windows are set off by simple sills, shutters, awnings of varying shapes and sizes

and, as noted, decorative surrounds. Many windows have metal or wooden bars over the openings. While probably installed for security purposes, the decorative design of most systems makes it a contributing element of the housing's design. Second story porches with ornamental railings and columns are a distinctive feature of a number of the larger homes. Porches at ground level are primarily created through the extension of the main roof over the front façade. In many homes, the carport functions like a front porch providing shading and locations for seating.

The Villa Monterey Historic District exhibits a high degree of integrity. In the field survey of the area only 7 houses, or less 1% of the population, were found to have alterations such that they no longer contributed the historic and architectural character of the district. This level of integrity is rare in neighborhoods dating from the mid-Twentieth century and increases its significance as an intact representation of early development and building practices.

Significance

Villa Monterey was one of many housing developments that sprang up in Scottsdale in the two decades of growth following World War II. While it shared similarities to much of the residential construction occurring at the time, it also differed in a number of ways. As noted, it was the product of Dave Freidman. Typical of many transplants before him, Freidman came to Arizona from the East in ill health, suffering from asthma. However, after only a year, his health improved and he came out of retirement to return to work as a home builder. With the high demand for housing, he quickly enjoyed success with several small-scale developments similar to what he had constructed in Pennsylvania. However, according to newspaper accounts from the period and interviews with those who knew him, Friedman wanted to do something more challenging than what he had done before. The purchase of 100 acres of land in an undeveloped area north of Scottsdale's small downtown, that was adjacent to a canal and scarred by a desert large wash with intermittent water flow presented both problems, and in Friedman's mind, interesting possibilities for a new design and approach that would be more unique than what was found in Scottsdale and Arizona at the time.

Through travel and research, Friedman developed a concept for the "Villa Monterey Colony Casitas." He drew his inspiration from other areas of the country with warm weather and those known for their 'gracious living.' Harkening to the early Spanish traditions of Arizona, he settled on the idea of building casitas, that is, small houses that were clustered together in a country-club setting. Although cautioned when he first began that trees would not grow well in the desert, he planned for parkways with trees, fragrant citrus groves and tall pecan trees. All which flourished. He was also advised that "Spanish" styles had not been used anywhere except in south Phoenix for years. Nonetheless, he designed the attractive models in his first development with Spanish Colonial accents. Front yards were reduced to make room for a larger backyard which could serve as an outdoor living room. The concept proved to be so popular that it sold out before all the houses planned for the Unit 1 could be constructed. Friedman continued to rapidly

expand and moved northward. A golf course was built on the wash spillway. Utilities were put underground. Each Spring he brought out new models with changes and improvements to previous house plans that were responsive to the desires and concerns expressed by the residents who had moved to his first units. Each new subdivision plat was built with a central recreation area with a landscaped park, pool, sauna and other recreational facilities.

The Villa Monterey townhomes sold out as quickly as Friedman could construct them. They offered residents proximity to the shops, dining, entertainment and cultural venues of the nearby downtown yet no commercial intrusions within the residential neighborhood. Located within the City limits, they had the metropolitan services of police, fire protection, water and sewer. "Within steps of their doorsteps" they could enjoy riding stables, an 18 hole golf course and club house and a range of other recreational options. Homeowner Associations (HOA) were organized to manage the complex in accordance with their By-laws and the deed restrictions on the individual properties. Overseeing alterations and improvements made to by owners to their homes, maintenance of the common facilities, landscaping and, often, sponsoring social activities, the HOA have responsibility for ensuring that the quality of the development of the original construction is maintained. Due to the diligence of the HOAs, Friedman's legacy and his vision for attractive, comfortable and convenient living have endured.

Summary Statement:

The Villa Monterey Historic District is considered historically and architecturally significant as a collection of homes that illustrate a particular type of building and a development pattern that influenced the physical form of Scottsdale in the postwar era and remains discernible and distinctive today. The work of a successful local builder who pioneered different approaches to development and marketing of homes in the post WWII era, it is significant because of it influenced how townhomes subsequently developed in Arizona. Further it is significant because of its high degree of integrity. The historic district provides excellent architectural examples, individually and collectively, of Southwestern-influenced forms, materials and detailing that has distinguished local and regional home building. The intact ornamentation and customized building features of the homes sets it apart as a product of a by-gone era and gives it a unique sense of time and place which should be preserved.